Circular Letter No. 134

March 6, 1929

VARIOUS TYPES OF MAGAZINES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY USE IN ENGLISH.

Government of Porto Rico
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of the Commissioner
San Juan

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Subject: VARIOUS TYPES OF MAGAZINES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY USE IN ENGLISH.

Supervisors of Schools,
High School Principals, and
High School Teachers of English:

The magazines of today in all their varied types carry such a wealth of information on the manifold developments of this century that they are for teachers and students a mine that richly repays the slightest attention given it. No better means for acquainting one with the myriad manifestations of this age could be found; the opportunity and privilege of the teacher is to lead the student to explore this rich field and to select for him that which lies within his comprehension and which will represent for him the wisest expenditure of his time. Our course of study affords us the opportunity of having a magazine as a part of the required work, but there still remains work that we may do in adding to the required work. By supplementary reading in magazines of the types of trade journals, professional journals, travel magazines, etc., we shall be able to accomplish something towards vocational guidance and towards acquainting the students with the many opportunities that abound today. For example, a survey of the advertising section of a group of half-dozen varied types magazines almost constitutes a liberal education, and afford the best possible substitute for a trip to the States. The enormous achievement of the higher type of American Journalism is something to be marvelled at and utilized. Furthermore, if carried into the homes, magazines in all their colorfulness will be an attractive representative of the English language.

Farm magazines show the tremendous progress is scientific agriculture. Magazines devoted to inventions assist in preventing a picture of what is being done. It is even quite valuable that magazines on dairying and the like be given a place along with Shakespeare in the English class room. Girls and boys who most likely will pass their lives in an agricultural district should be lead to read as a part of their leisure reading magazines that carry information of a practical, vocational sort. The women's magazines are very valuable for the reforms in sanitation that they describe for the home. Obviously, it may be said that in many homes there are not facilities for carrying out the many attractive plans outlined in such magazines, but

we hope that some day modern home conveniences will be available for all, and for that reason we may begin now on the study of them. Likewise, is it true that the commercial journals published in Porto Rico should be especially studied. Likewise, is it true that the commercial journals published in Porto Rico should be especially studied. Professional journals of every sort should also be read. And to finish the list, there are Life and Judge.

SUGGESTED PLAN FOR COLLECTING MAGAZINES

Those teachers with whom this matter has been discussed have expressed an earnest conviction as to the necessity of such reading; but in some cases they reported that such material is not available in the school. In reply to this it has been suggested that in each town

a) that the students of some class write letters to the president of every organization in town asking them to contribute their English magazines after they have been read, and stating if the contributor of magazines lives near a student that that student will be asked to call for the magazine on whatever date the contributor specifies, or in case he does not live near a student, asking that he deliver them to some specified point;

b) that the students write letters to individuals, who may or may not be members of the organizations written to, asking for their magazines, making the same offer as that named above; and

c) that the local dealers of magazines be asked to contribute each week the old English magazines when the new issues come. (This activity has already been carried out in San Juan, and therefore this part of this letter does not apply to San Juan.)

It would be a very good plan to secure some representative in such organizations to constantly work on securing the cooperation of the members.

For collecting the magazines:

a) in cases of persons living near some student that student should be asked to volunteer to collect the magazines on some date specified by the contributor and bring them to school. This can be worked out by reading aloud to the students the names of the contributors and inquiring who lives near each one, and asking that student to volunteer to collect the magazines;

b) in cases of persons who do not live near a student they should be asked to deliver their magazines to some specified place.

In many cases where this plan has been used valuable collections of magazines have been donated to the school. One particular

instance of this is the case of a woman who lived in Ponce who had quite a few years subscriptions of the National GEOGRAPHIC that she was glad to give to the schools together with a great many other magazines, as she is the subscriber to many English magazines.

ISSUING THE MAGAZINES TO THE STUDENTS

As long as the collection is rather limited in number the magazines may be issued like books. For example, a magazine may be given to each student on Friday; he is allowed to keep it a week, at the end of which he returns it and is given another. Efforts should be made to inquire into the individual tastes of the students and to give each one the magazine that will be of most valuable to him.

As soon as the collection increases in number it will become possible to give students magazines to keep. After the magazines become more or less worn, the soiled pages may be torn off and the magazines given to the students. Usually Saturday Evening Posts become quite numerous and may be used for this purpose; students are always enthusiastic about it. In case of magazines of permanent value as The National Geographic, The Mentor, etc., it would be well perhaps to keep them as a permanent part of the library.

In one case the teacher kept Life and Judge to be issued somewhat as a reward; the students always enjoyed getting a copy and spent many minutes in earnest word study trying to puzzle out the meaning of the jokes.

WHEN IS A MAGAZINE TOO OLD TO BE INTERESTING?

When is a magazine too old to be interesting? Never, if you have not read it before. On rare occasions a student has been heard to say that a magazine is not the current issue and therefore too old. A good answer for him is to ask if he has read it before; most likely he will answer no, and then he may be told that the magazine is, therefore, new for him.

PACKAGES OF MAGAZINES FROM SAN JUAN

In some cases the supply of English magazines in a locality does not equal that of another district. If after a district has been thoroughly canvassed, the supply of magazines of the type we are interested in is not sufficient, extra copies may be secured from San Juan. Students and teachers of San Juan have very kindly agreed to prepare packages of magazines for distribution among the high schools of the Island in case the teachers of the other

high schools wish to have such packages. In order to avail oneself of this service it is necessary to write to us and tell us in order that we may prepare the magazines for distribution. All that is expected of the teachers is that they will ask some friend when coming to San Juan to stop at Central High School or Carnegie Library and ask for a package. Mr. G. E. Audas, Principal of Central High School and Mr. Luis O'Neill, Librarian of Carnegie Library, have very kindly contributed space for this undertaking, and packages may be found at those two locations, as well as here at the Department.

In order to find the persons who are coming to San Juan, establish a sort of "grape-vine telegraph" among the faculty of the school and among your friends so that the idea will be widely advertised that the school will greatly appreciate anyone's volunteering to deliver the package of magazines. Likewise, matter of delivering the magazines can be greatly facilitated for towns on the far side of the Island by the following plan: for example, if the persons in San Germán know of someone in Mayàguez who is coming to San Juan, delivery would be simplified if the person in Mayaguez were asked to bring a package for San Germán, as the school in San Germán would most likely find it easier to get a package from Mayaguez than from San Juan. By thus establishing a half-way station, the work is made easier. The San Juan office will be very glad to assist in arranging such schedules if asked to do so.

The general plan is left to the execution of the high schools.

USE OF THE MAGAZINES

Material from the magazines will be useful in supplying material for compositions as explained in Circular Letter No. 82. Themes should be written in class and thus eliminate the possibility of copying from the reference material. Further material for oral English can be secured.

One very excellent project was carried out as follows: one class wrote a set of letters asking for samples of various articles and free pamphlets on commercial goods. When all the samples were received, each student brought his sample to class and made a talk explaining it. In some cases, the talks were made in the nature of a salesman's speech; that is, made for the purpose of convincing the class of the superior merit of some articles. This plan may be used also simply by referring to the advertising section of a magazine, the students giving speeches on why Ivory soap is the very best soap for all purposes, why Glostora gets the best results, why Ipana toothpaste is so good, etc.

Boys interested in radio should read radio magazines and then explain to the class in a way that can be understood by all the recent inventions in radio. Some one interested in rice might secure the journal on rice and give a series of reports on the importing of rice, what it means financially, the possibility of a home grown product being substituted for rice, etc. Girls may choose topics related to the home or if interested may choose any other topic. The horizon of a girl's activities should not be limited to the home if she cares to expand it; if a girl wants to talk on agriculture, let her do so; perhaps she may have a husband someday who is an agriculturist and she will be able to assist him to acquire new methods of doing his work.

Giving a series of related talks. Very frequently it has been found most successful to have the students plan for their work in oral English a series of related talks on one topic. To choose one topic, divide it into a series of related parts, forces the student to collect, select, and organize material, an exercise that usually gives better practice than series of unrelated topics.

WRITTEN REPORT

If you desire to secure the magazine packages from San Juan, please write us.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) JUAN B. HUYKE,
Commissioner of Education

vd/mb